

EXTRADITION TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND GREAT BRITAIN.

M E S S A G E

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN RELATION TO

The extradition treaty with Great Britain.

JUNE 20, 1876.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

By the tenth article of the treaty between the United States and Great Britain, signed in Washington on the 9th day of August, 1842, it was agreed that the two governments should, upon mutual requisitions respectively made, deliver up to justice all persons who, being charged with certain crimes therein enumerated, committed within the jurisdiction of either, should seek an asylum or be found within the territories of the other.

The only condition or limitation contained in the treaty to the reciprocal obligation thus to deliver up the fugitive was that it should be done only upon such evidence of criminality as, according to the laws of the place where the fugitive or person so charged should be found, would justify his apprehension and commitment for trial, if the crime or offense had there been committed.

In the month of February last a requisition was duly made, in pursuance of the provisions of the treaty, by this Government upon that of Great Britain for the surrender of one Ezra D. Winslow, charged with extensive forgeries and the utterance of forged paper, committed within the jurisdiction of the United States, who had sought an asylum and was found within the territories of Her Britannic Majesty, and was apprehended in London. The evidence of the criminality of the fugitive was duly furnished and heard, and being found sufficient to justify his apprehension and commitment for trial, if the crimes had been committed in Great Britain, he was held and committed for extradition.

Her Majesty's government, however, did not deliver up the fugitive in accordance with the terms of the treaty, notwithstanding every requirement thereof had been met on the part of the United States, but, instead of surrendering the fugitive, demanded certain assurances or stipulations not mentioned in the treaty, but foreign to its provisions, as a

condition of the performance by Great Britain of her obligations under the treaty.

In a recent communication to the House of Representatives, and in answer to a call from that body for information on this case, I submitted the correspondence which has passed between the two governments with reference thereto. It will be found in Executive Document No. 173 of the House of Representatives of the present session, and I respectfully refer thereto for more detailed information bearing on the question.

It appears from the correspondence that the British government bases its refusal to surrender the fugitive and its demand for stipulations or assurances from this Government on the requirements of a purely domestic enactment of the British Parliament passed in the year 1870.

This act was brought to the notice of this Government shortly after its enactment, and Her Majesty's government was advised that the United States understood it as giving continued effect to the existing engagements under the treaty of 1842 for the extradition of criminals; and, with this knowledge on its part and without dissent from the declared views of the United States as to the unchanged nature of the reciprocal rights and obligations of the two powers under the treaty, Great Britain has continued to make requisitions and to grant surrenders in numerous instances without suggestion that it was contemplated to depart from the practice under the treaty which has obtained for more than thirty years, until now, for the first time, in this case of Winslow, it is assumed that under this act of Parliament Her Majesty may require a stipulation or agreement not provided for in the treaty as a condition to the observance by her government of its treaty obligations toward this country.

This I have felt it my duty emphatically to repel.

In addition to the case of Winslow, requisition was also made by this Government on that of Great Britain for the surrender of Charles J. Brent, also charged with forgery committed in the United States and found in Great Britain. The evidence of criminality was duly heard and the fugitive committed for extradition.

A similar stipulation to that demanded in Winslow's case was also asked in Brent's, and was likewise refused.

It is with extreme regret that I am now called upon to announce to you that Her Majesty's government has finally released both of these fugitives, Winslow and Brent, and set them at liberty, thus omitting to comply with the provisions and requirements of the treaty under which the extradition of fugitive criminals is made between the two governments.

The position thus taken by the British government, if adhered to, cannot but be regarded as the abrogation and annulment of the article of the treaty on extradition.

Under these circumstances it will not, in my judgment, comport with the dignity or self-respect of this Government to make demands upon that government for the surrender of fugitive criminals, nor to entertain any requisition of that character from that government under the treaty.

It will be a cause of deep regret if a treaty which has been thus beneficial in its practical operation, which has worked so well and so efficiently, and which, notwithstanding the exciting and at times violent political disturbances of which both countries have been the scene during its existence, has given rise to no complaints on the part of either government against either its spirit or its provisions, should be abruptly terminated.

It has tended to the protection of society and to the general interests of both countries. Its violation or annulment would be a retrograde step in international intercourse.

I have been anxious and have made the effort to enlarge its scope, and to make a new treaty which would be a still more efficient agent for the punishment and prevention of crime. At the same time I have felt it my duty to decline to entertain a proposition made by Great Britain, pending its refusal to execute the existing treaty, to amend it by practically conceding by treaty the identical conditions which that government demands under its act of Parliament. In addition to the impossibility of the United States entering upon negotiations under the menace of an intended violation or a refusal to execute the terms of an existing treaty, I deemed it unadvisable to treat of only the one amendment proposed by Great Britain, while the United States desires an enlargement of the list of crimes for which extradition may be asked, and other improvements which experience has shown might be embodied in a new treaty.

It is for the wisdom of Congress to determine whether the article of the treaty relating to extradition is to be any longer regarded as obligatory on the Government of the United States or as forming part of the supreme law of the land. Should the attitude of the British government remain unchanged, I shall not, without an expression of the wish of Congress that I should do so, take any action either in making or granting requisitions for the surrender of fugitive criminals under the treaty of 1842.

Respectfully submitted.

U. S. GRANT.

WASHINGTON, *June 20, 1876.*

